

# SURVEY ON BPM CONFERENCE IMPRESSIONS

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In May/June 2014, the Program Committee Chairs of BPM 2015 conducted a survey with present and past attendees and submitters to the BPM conference to gather feedback on the general perception of the conference. The survey is available at <http://survey.qut.edu.au/f/180586/6bb1/>. In particular, the survey included questions about the reputation of the conference, the reasons why survey participants submitted papers, whether they plan to submit to BPM 2015, and soliciting input on a number of suggested changes and additions to the conduct of the conference series.

144 members of the community responded, including 80 academics, 48 research students, 9 research practitioners and corporate scientists and 7 BPM practitioners. The respondents came from various research fields. In particular, 49% of respondents reported that their research field is Information Systems (IS), followed by Computer Science (30%) and Software Engineering (14%). We note, firstly, that we only captured the primary research field affiliation as

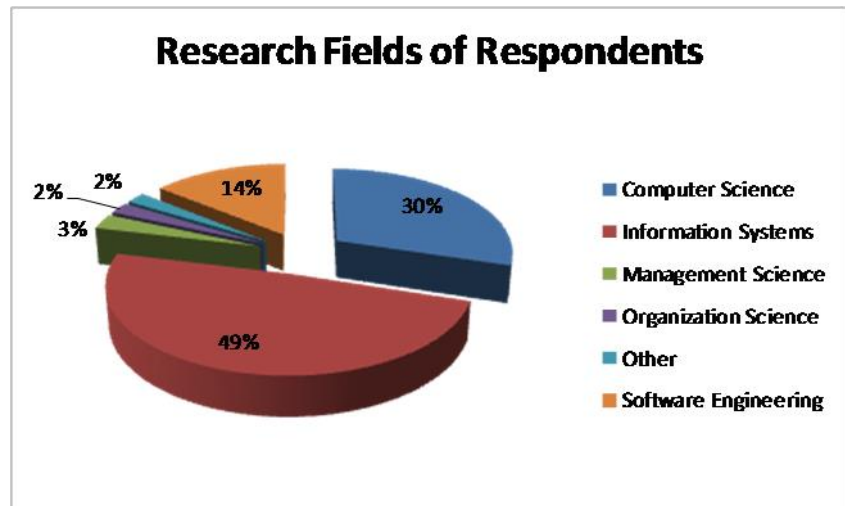


Figure 1. Distribution of survey respondents by primary research field

interpreted by the participants. It may well be that participants feel they belong to many disciplines (e.g., Information Systems and Computer Science). Secondly, we note that we made a dedicated effort to increase

survey participation from IS community to gather their feedback. Even though this may have skewed the results somewhat, the survey respondents' distribution shows that the BPM community is

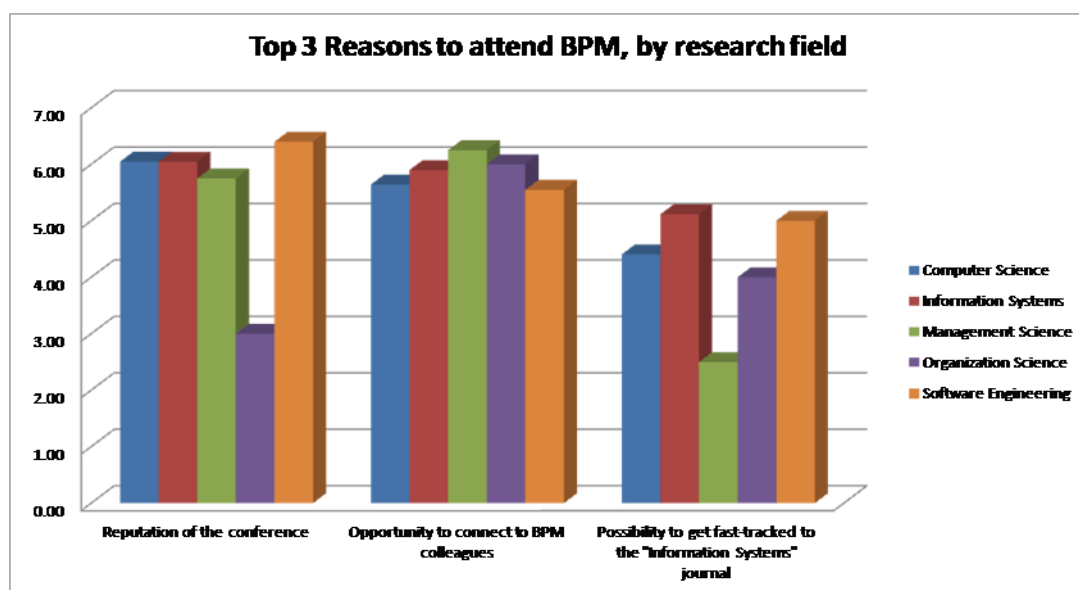


Figure 2. Top three reasons to attend BPM conference, by research field

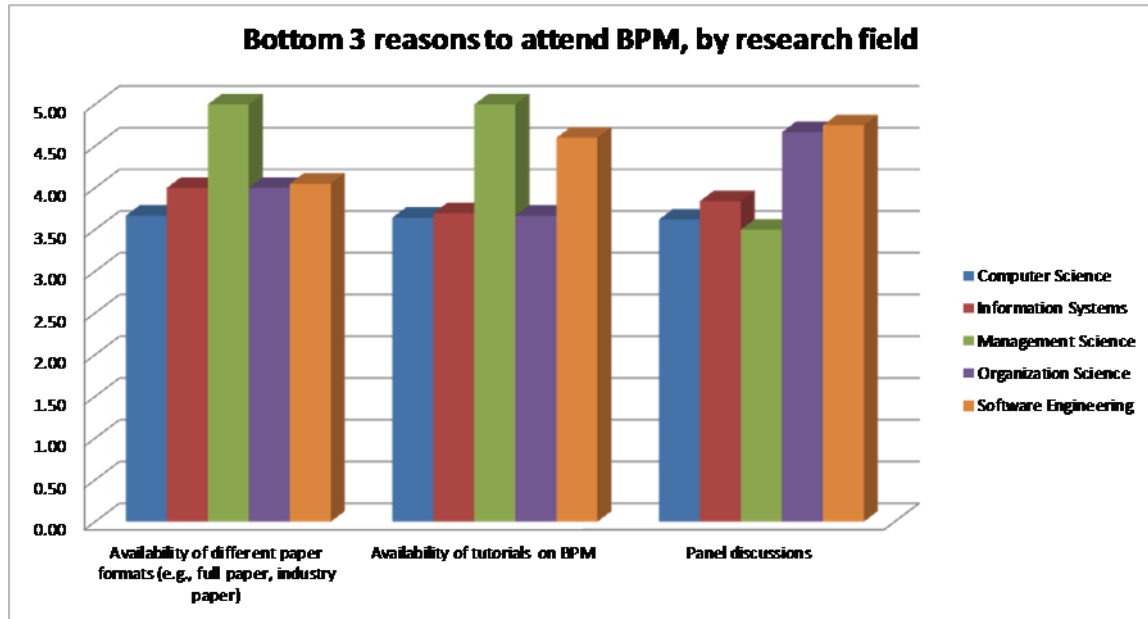


Figure 3. Bottom three reasons to attend BPM conference, by research field

both large and diverse (see Figure 1).

Overall, 46% of respondents stated that they intend to submit a paper to BPM 2015, and a further 42% were unsure at this stage. By research field, the strongest submission intentions were from software engineering (60%) and computer science (55%). Researchers from Information Systems were mostly unsure (45%), so were management and organizational scientists (50% and 33%, respectively, reportedly will not submit) – albeit the absolute number of respondents these two fields were much lower.

The top three reasons the re-

spondents stated for attending the BPM conference are:

- 1) the *reputation of the conference* in the community,
- 2) the *opportunity to connect* to fellow BPM colleagues, and
- 3) the *possibility to get fast-tracked* to Elsevier's "Information Systems" journal.

By contrast, *panel discussions*, *BPM tutorials* and the availability of *different paper formats* were rated as significantly lower priority reasons for attending BPM. Figure 2 shows reported scores for the top three reasons on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 7 (important)

by research fields of the respondents, and Figure 3 shows the reported scores for the bottom three reasons.

Looking at ways in which the BPM conference series could be made even more attractive to the community, Table 1 lists the suggestions that were rated particularly high or low.

A top journal fast-track opportunity was particularly of interest to the software engineering and information systems community. The top-rated recommendation of computer scientists was to increase the recognition of the BPM conference as a top publication outlet. We interpret this data as

Table 1: Recommendations for improvements to the BPM conference series

3 most highly rated recommendations	3 lowest rated recommendations
Provide a <i>fast-track opportunity to a top-ranked journal</i> (e.g., AIS Top-8, IEEE or ACM).	Publish papers in proceedings <i>without assignment of copyright</i> .
Increase the <i>recognition of the BPM conference as a publication outlet</i> in the institutions and wider community.	Add <i>alternative workshops</i> to the conference.
Select <i>cost-effective locations</i> for the conference.	Allow <i>research-in-progress papers</i> without full publication in the proceedings.

highlighting the relevance of journal fast-tracks to the community and the question whether more targeted journal venues with high esteem to different communities could be found. A possible way would be to have special issues appear in a different journal each year. Finally, choosing a cost-effective location was particularly highly rated by the management and organizational science members.

Finally, the survey also elicited open feedback from the respondents, which provided additional deep insights into standing and motivation of the BPM community. Selected comments, ranging from critical, suggestive to supportive categories, are listed in Table 2.

Based on the results of this survey, as Chairs of BPM 2015 we are planning to implement the following suggestions and changes:

- While maintaining an interest in the core BPM theory and practice as the heart of the conference, we plan to expand the topic areas, for which BPM 2015 will be soliciting submissions, into a broader scope that includes *interdisciplinary research* involving processes, and also puts more emphasis on *emerging areas* of BPM, as its own topic area, to encourage broader linkage between the state of the art (academia) and the state of the practice (industry) in the BPM space.
- We will expand our outreach to other areas of interdisciplinary research by inviting PC members who are doing research in closely related areas but have not necessarily been at the core of the BPM field.
- Together with the General Chair, we have ongoing discussions with the rest of the organizing committee, in particular the Industry Chairs, to introduce changes to stimulate industry participation and input to the conference beyond an industry paper track.
- We also are contemplating several other minor changes to the structure of the program committee and the reviewing process, in an effort to maintain the high quality standards the community is expecting from BPM 2015 and also welcoming novel and original research to the community.
- Finally, in order to support first-time-submitters to BPM, we intend to offer an early feedback round in which PC members can comment on potential submissions before the actual deadline.

**Table 2: Comments by participants**

Why or why not submit to BPM	The reputation of the conference
The focus is increasingly on journal papers, not conference papers.	The conference is not ranked in most institutions or countries.
The acceptance rate is too low and the accepted papers are not of high quality.	The overall visibility in the wider community is low.
The conference is missing what is happening in industry.	The feedback in the review process is hard but of high quality.
What is important	Variations to the conference
Feedback is provided from esteemed and reputable BPM scholars, for papers and junior researchers.	Make journal fast-track opportunities competitive and rewarding.
Conference locations allow for attendance by most.	Provide travel grants and cheap accommodation for some groups.
Providing awards (e.g., for best student papers).	Include "meet the expert" sessions or speed-dating opportunities.
How submissions should be handled	Improving the community
Maintaining different topic areas is attractive.	Actively address and connect to other communities.
Switching to a double-blind reviewing process.	Invite researchers from other fields.
Select reviewers that have methodological expertise rather than domain expertise.	Make access to tools, demos and data obligatory.
Open up the conference to other types of research (e.g., behavioral studies).	Create a well-known journal specific to BPM.
Limit number of submissions per author.	Market to practitioner outlets.